

**Numbers to call if disease is suspected:**

*Nebraska Department of Agriculture  
Bureau of Animal Industry  
(402) 471-2351*

*USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services  
(402) 434-2300*

*USDA Hotline, Biosecurity for the Birds  
866-536-7593*

*Nebraska Game and Parks Commission  
(for wild and migratory birds)  
(402) 471-0641*

**Web Sites:**

*Nebraska Department of Agriculture  
[www.agr.ne.gov](http://www.agr.ne.gov)*

*Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA  
"Biosecurity for the Birds"  
[www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/birdbiosecurity/](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/birdbiosecurity/)*

*American Veterinary Medical Association  
[www.avma.org](http://www.avma.org)*

*Nebraska Health and Human Services System  
[www.hhs.state.ne.us/pandemic](http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/pandemic)*

*Department of Health and Human Services  
[www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)*



**For more information:**

*Nebraska Department of Agriculture  
Bureau of Animal Industry  
P.O. Box 94787  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4787  
Toll Free: 800-572-2437  
Phone: (402) 471-2351  
Fax: (402) 471-6893  
Web Site: [www.agr.ne.gov](http://www.agr.ne.gov)*

# *Avian Influenza*



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*Nebraska Department of Agriculture  
Bureau of Animal Industry*

# Avian Influenza

## What is Avian Influenza (AI)?

Avian influenza (AI), or bird flu, is a rapidly spreading viral disease that mainly infects birds. Migratory birds are natural carriers. AI affects chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, ducks, geese, and guinea fowl.

## Is AI contagious? Who is susceptible? How is it transmitted?

- Yes, AI is contagious.
- Although rare, humans and other mammals can be vulnerable to the disease.
- The disease may spread by direct contact with infected birds, aerosol, and contaminated objects, such as footwear, clothing, equipment, and vehicles.
- Birds, especially poultry, are the most susceptible animal.
- Exists naturally in wild birds.

## What are the signs of AI? In birds:

- Can range from no clinical signs to sudden death.

### Signs can include:

- Decrease in egg production.
- Soft-shelled or misshapen eggs.
- Swelling of the head, eyelids, comb, and wattles.

- Purple discoloration of the wattles, combs, and legs.
- Respiratory signs: coughing, sneezing, respiratory distress.
- Unstable coordination.
- Sudden death.

## How do I avoid AI or stop it from spreading?

- Avoid contact with sick birds.
- Avoid live bird markets.
- Wash your hands before and after any contact with animals.
- When traveling abroad, do not bring any prohibited items back to the United States.
- Wash and disinfect any items used while traveling abroad.
- Use strict biosecurity measures on your farm.
  - Keep flock away from wild birds.
  - Restrict unauthorized people and vehicles from the farm.
  - Monitor and record any visitors or vehicles coming on or off the farm.
  - Clean and disinfect equipment and vehicles when traveling onto or off of the farm.
  - Clean and disinfect footwear after leaving animal areas.
  - Do not move animals from farm to farm.
  - Isolate any new or returning animals for at least two weeks to allow time for disease signs to develop before exposure to your flock.
  - Isolate any animals showing signs of illness.
  - Quarantine the contaminated area.
  - Notify your veterinarian immediately of

any suspected disease.

- Although poultry vaccines are available, there is not a vaccine that covers all 15 strains of the disease. Therefore, since there is no way to determine which strain will infect a flock, vaccines are generally not practical to prevent infection.

## How is AI treated?

- At this time, no specific treatment is known.

## Are there public health risks?

- Although rare, humans can be vulnerable to the disease. Most human cases have occurred in people with close contact to infected birds or their environment.
- If you have had contact with infected birds or are showing symptoms, contact your health care provider immediately.
- There have been no reported cases of AI following consumption of fully-cooked meat.

## What are the signs of AI in humans?

- Typical flu-like symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches.
- Eye infection.
- Pneumonia.
- Respiratory distress.